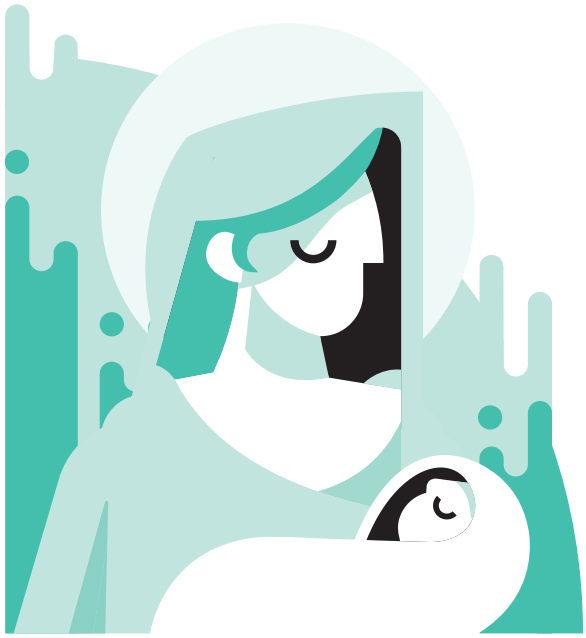


Unit .28

Christmas

The Word Made Flesh

Scripture

John 1:10-18

10 He was in the world, and the world was created
through him, and yet the world did not recognize
him. **11** He came to his own, and his own people did
not receive him. **12** But to all who did receive him,
he gave them the right to be children of God, to those
who believe in his name, **13** who were born, not of
natural descent, or of the will of the flesh, or of the
will of man, but of God. **14** The Word became flesh
and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory
as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace
and truth. **15** (John testified concerning him and
exclaimed, "This was the one of whom I said, 'The
one coming after me ranks ahead of me, because he
existed before me.'") **16** Indeed, we have all received
grace upon grace from his fullness, **17** for the law
was given through Moses; grace and truth came
through Jesus Christ. **18** No one has ever seen God.
The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at
the Father's side—he has revealed him.

Intro Options

Main Point:
Jesus is the living Word who came to reveal God to us.

Option 1

Tell your students to imagine your church has purchased advertising airtime. Your students will record thirty-second commercials that will be played on the radio, on music streaming services, and the start of YouTube videos. Your church wants your students to include at least two of the following three points in each commercial:

- Who Jesus is
- Why He came
- What He brings us

Form small groups with your students to work on developing a commercial together. Encourage creativity, conciseness, and precision. Then "air" them. Debrief how they went, what was done well, and any important details they may have missed.

Introduce today's lesson as John's introductory "commercial" for Jesus. John's gospel began by describing Jesus as the Word of God (who Jesus is) who came to reveal God's glory (why He came) and to bring us grace and truth (what He brings us).

Option 2

With your entire student crew, conduct a brainstorm session on the following topics: "Myths about who Jesus is and what He gives us." Make two lists (one for who Jesus is and one for what He gives us) and have your students come up with as many myths for each as possible. These misconceptions can be ideas either Christians or non-Christians might hold; for instance, that Jesus is just a good teacher or that Jesus came to be our personal assistant.

Once you've made a good list, randomly assign one misconception to each student (or each pair of students). Their job is now to show an example of that misconception and then to correct that misconception; they can do so in a little rhyme or jingle, in a two-panel picture, or in a brief skit (for pairs). Once students have made and shared their misconceptions and corrections, see how many of their corrections touched on ideas in today's lesson on John 1:10-17. In today's text, John will clearly teach us who Jesus is (the Word of God) and what He gives us (a revelation of God's glory and grace and truth).

TEACHING PLAN

Read John 1:10-13.

There was once a man who chose to stay home from church one Christmas Eve. The thought of God becoming a man was, in his mind, impossible. So he sent his family to church, but wanted nothing to do with it himself. As he sat in the quiet, he heard a thud against his window. When he went to investigate, he found a flock of birds outside, and one, in an attempt to escape the cold, had slammed against the window. The man wanted to help, and decided to lead the birds into his barn, but every time he tried the birds scattered, frightened by the strange man. He thought to himself, "If only I could be a bird and speak their language, I could show them the way into the barn." Just then, the church bells rang, and the man realized the wonder of Christmas.

- **When have you wanted to help someone (or even an animal), but couldn't help them to understand why or how?**

Throughout Scripture, light and life are often linked. We see it in the first verses of John 1. The Word was active in creation—God spoke and light was created (Gen. 1:3-5). Light makes it possible for life to exist, and in John 1:4, John makes it clear that life was "in Him"—that is, in Jesus. He is the source of both physical and spiritual life. "The true light that gives light to everyone" (v. 9) shines in our lives, opening our eyes to the truth of the gospel that we would have new life in Christ.

In John 3:3, Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Truly I tell you, unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." We are born physically alive, but spiritually dead in our sins and separated relationally from God. We are blind to the gospel. In order for us to see the kingdom of God, we must be born again into new life. The true children of God are "those who believe in his name, who were born, not of natural descent, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God" (v. 13).

Without the incarnation of Christ, we would never be cleansed by Jesus' sacrifice and born again by the Spirit—we would never have eternal life. Thankfully, Jesus became one of us that we would clearly understand God and His purpose for us.

- **Why was it necessary that God became one of us?**

99 Essential Doctrines (p. 24, DDG)

Adoption

Adoption into God's family is one the positive benefits of justification. Not only are we pardoned from the judgment against us through justification, but we also experience a change of identity—we become children of God (John 1:12; Gal. 4:5). Through adoption our relationship with God, which was once lost through the fall, is now restored, resulting in the benefits of being an heir of God and a co-heir with Christ (Rom. 8:16-17).

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
Jesus is the living Word who came to reveal God to us.

John 1

John's prologue shows us that the creative work of God was accomplished through the Word, who is Jesus: "All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created" (John 1:3). Jesus, the eternal Son, was the creative agent through whom God created all the universe. In Hebrews 3:3, we see the superiority of Jesus over Moses by the description of Jesus as the builder of the house whereas Moses was no more than a faithful steward in the house. The argument is this: Why turn to the servant when you have access to the builder? The Creator knows best how your life is to be run.

"He—the Word who was the light—'was' (ἦν, ēn) in the world: not just paying a fleeting visit, but, as John goes on to elaborate in 1:14, 'dwelling among us.' Even though the world was created through the Word (an echo of 1:3), it did not recognize that Word, because it was estranged from him. Yet the world should have recognized the one through whom it was made. The first half of John's Gospel documents how not only the pagan world, but even Israel—'his own'—failed to recognize Jesus as Messiah and Savior of the world, rejecting the light, including all demonstrations of Jesus' deity and messiahship (his 'signs'; cf. 12:37-43, citing Isa. 53:1) … Being a child of God is neither a quality possessed by all nor an exclusive prerogative for Israelites; it is an entitlement for those who believe in the Word … This assumes that, in one sense, sinful people are not God's children, even though they are created by God, unless and until they believe in Jesus Christ (cf. 1 John 3:1-2). John is careful to distinguish believers, who become children (τέκνα, tekna) of God, from Jesus, who is the unique Son (υἱός, huios) of God."[1]

In Defense (p. 26, DDG)

Jesus wasn't born just anywhere—He was born in "the city of David, which is called Bethlehem." This fact was foretold by the prophet Micah eight hundred years earlier (Mic. 5:2). When the Roman empire required that all people travel to the towns of their ancestors, Joseph traveled with Mary approximately 90 miles from their hometown of Nazareth south to Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-3). Once Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem, they found that "there was no guest room available for them." Most people in Bethlehem lived in one-room homes, and the animal's feeding troughs were typically in the family's living area. Although the animals likely stayed outside, accommodations were made in the wall for an animal to stick his head in to eat from the trough. Larger homes had an adjoining room where guests could sleep. So, the young couple likely slept in the living area and when Jesus was born, His first crib was an inglorious feeding trough.

TEACHING PLAN

Read John 1:14-15.

The Word came to reveal God's glory to us. From eternity, the Second Person of the Trinity was the Word. Jesus didn't merely come to speak God's message to the world as a prophet of God. Rather, Jesus is the very message of God. As the one who is truly God and truly man, Jesus is God's ultimate and final message to a lost world. The Word reveals God's glory, showing us the perfect picture of God.

God created us with the purpose of bringing Him glory by knowing Him personally and reflecting His character to the world. But since the Fall in Genesis 3, we can do neither. The serpent in Genesis 3 tempted Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, saying they would become like God. In essence, the lie was a temptation to live for themselves and not for God's glory. Because of Adam and Eve's disobedience, our relationship with God has been severed and the sin nature we inherited obstructs our ability to demonstrate God's character to the world.

For centuries, people tried to undo what was done by sin, but never successfully. Our situation was hopeless. But God intervened on our behalf to send His Son, Jesus. Jesus came into this world to reconnect us with our original purpose for living. Jesus lived for the glory of God, and as we follow Jesus, we are empowered to live for this same purpose.

- **How is the character and nature of God visible in the life of Jesus?**
- **When has your own joy increased as you have lived for God and not yourself?**

Read John 1:16-18.

The law came through Moses for the purpose of pointing forward to the grace and truth that is in Jesus. The law revealed God's character and His righteous requirements for His people. The law showed us that we could never live up to God's righteous standards. It shows us that we will fail and there is nothing we can do to live the way God demands. In essence, the law shows us truly how sinful we are.

But what the law could not provide, Jesus provided through His life, death, resurrection, and the sending of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:3-4). Over and over, John stressed that Jesus is the revelation of God and the fulfillment of all the Law and the Prophets. The entire Old Testament pointed to Jesus so that we might find life in Him.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us so that we might have grace and truth. Jesus came not only to provide us with salvation, but also with a perfect example of how to live. We are called, like Jesus, to go out among those who don't know God's grace and truth, so that those separated from God would be restored to see, hear, and experience the gospel to be saved. This is at the heartbeat of what is meant by incarnational living.

- **Considering our salvation is completely of grace and entirely because of Christ, how does this move you to worship?**

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
Jesus is the living Word who came to reveal God to us.

John 1

"This incarnation or embodiment of the *Logos* (which means "Word," and was, to Greeks, divine reason which ordered the universe and gave it meaning) would have been unthinkable in the various strands of Greek philosophy. But it is the marvel and miracle of our faith: the Son of God became human. John and the other disciples were able to know the Word as a fellow human being, who differed from them only in that He was full of grace and truth."[2]

"Having declared that they who received Him were 'born of God' and had become 'sons of God,' He adds the cause and reason of this unspeakable honor. It is that 'the Word became flesh,' that the Master took on Him the form of a servant. For He became Son of man, who was God's own Son, in order that He might make the sons of men [humankind] to be children of God. For when the high associates with the low, it does not touch its own honor at all. Instead, it raises up the other from its excessive lowness. So it was with the Lord. By no means did He diminish His own nature by his condescension, but He raised us, who had always sat in disgrace and darkness, to unspeakable glory."[3]

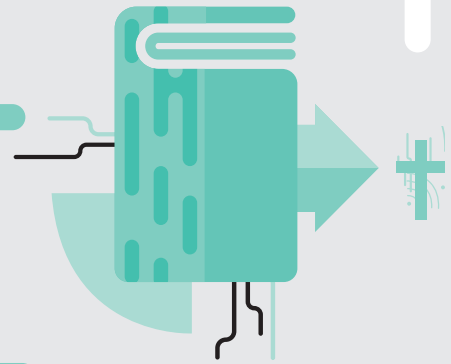
Activity

Your students will be creating "Christmas Conversation Pieces." Have each of your students think of what their favorite kind of Christmas item is: wreaths, bells, Christmas tree ornaments, Christmas cookies, candy canes, fruitcake. Once each student has decided on their favorite Christmas item, their job is to make an example of that Christmas item that displays at least one of the ideas from the lesson today. If you have supplies and crafty kids, let them make the items. If you don't, have them draw what their item would look like.

For instance, someone who chose a Christmas tree ornament might make a small crystal globe with a bright light in the center because the ornament reflects how Jesus reveals God's glory. A Christmas cookie might be topped with blue and white icing as a reflection of how Jesus brings us grace (the blue icing) and truth (the white icing). Once students have made their items, have each student share how he or she would use that item as a conversation piece to witness to others (like house-guests) about who Jesus is and why He came at Christmas.

(p. 25, DDG) Christ Connection

The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ, the One who came to reveal God perfectly to us and give eternal life to all who believe in Him.



THE WORD MADE FLESH

John 1:10–18

THE WORD MADE FLESH

Jesus is the living word who came to reveal God to us.

JESUS CONNECTION

The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ, the one who came to reveal God perfectly to us and give eternal life to all who believe in Him.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

SACRIFICE – Giving of myself to help someone else.

HEAD

What right does God give to those who believe in Jesus?

What does it mean that grace and truth came through Jesus, compared to the law?

HEART

What did Jesus willingly sacrifice to “become flesh and dwell among us”? What makes someone willing to sacrifice for someone else?

When is it especially difficult for you to sacrifice for others? How might it help you to give of yourself, knowing that Jesus gave all and died for your sins?

HANDS

It is much harder to willingly sacrifice for the people we see everyday and sometimes don’t get along with. Choose one person you struggle to give of yourself to help (a sibling, classmate, neighbor, etc.). This week, pray and ask God to help you think of 2–3 ways that you can sacrifice to help them and then do them willingly.